DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 225 JC 820 487

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TITLE Careers for Homemakers (A Displaced Homemakers Program).
INSTITUTION Saint Louis Community Coll., Mo.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Ancillary School Services; *Career Counseling; Community Colleges; *Employment Services; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Females; Job Placement; Job Search Methods; Program Descriptions; *Reentry Workers; Two Year Colleges; *Womens Education

ABSTRACT

St. Louis Community College's Careers for Homemakers program is a vocational counseling program designed to help displaced homemakers enter the job market for the first time or after a significant absence. The program's goal is to place participants, chosen according to academic or economic disadvantaged eligibility, in jobs consistent with their capabilities. The program offers career interest testing; monthly job readiness skills workshops on topics such as confidence building, resume preparation, job interview skills, and stress management; use of an up-to-date job bank, the college job placement center, and state and private employment agencies; referrals to college facilities and services; a job club, which provides support, information, assistance, and job referrals to program participants who are considered job ready; a bi-monthly support group supplying reinforcement and encouragement to participants adjusting to the world of work; and weekly assertiveness training classes on dealing with anxiety and developing positive coping skills and self-images. The program provides facilities and resources to a segment of the population often underserved by social service programs, segregated into low paying jobs, and discriminated against on the basis of age. Since its inception, the program has served 1,820 displaced homemakers, 35% of whom have found employment in unsubsidized jobs. Such programs should be supported and expanded in the interest of full national employment. (HB)

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CAREERS FOR HOMEMAKERS (A DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS PROGRAM)

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CAREERS FOR HOMEMAKERS
(A Displaced Homemakers Program)
ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Careers for Homemakers," is a displaced homemakers program located on all three campuses of the St. Louis Community College, offered through the Institute for Continuing Education. It is a vocational counseling program designed to help displaced homemakers, (as described in Public Law 94,482, Page 2188, Section 210L) enter the job market for the first time or after a significant absence. The program offers career interest testing, job training assistance, assistance in job placement, workshops in job related skills, supportive counseling and referrals to supportive agencies. All services are free to clients living in the St. Louis area.

Since the program's inception in August 1979, "Careers for Homemakers" has provided various services to 1820 persons. Of this population, approximately one-fourth (25%) had less than a high school education and lacked vocational or educational skills necessary for employment. Approximately two-thirds (63%) were economically disadvantaged in that they were unemployed, or recipients of public assistance, or the family income was below the national poverty level. Of the total number served, 47% were Caucasions, 52% Black and less than 1% of Hispanic origin.

Of the 1820 who have availed themselves of the services of the program, 631, or 35% are now employed in unsubsidized jobs. Their employment was either a result of direct job placement or assistance in entering vocational training or in job hunting techniques provided by the Careers for Homemakers program. Currently 450 or 24% of the participants are either in vocational training or are seeking vocational training.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The general goal of the project is the placement of each participant into a job which is consistent with that individual's capabilities. Participants attempting to re-enter the job market may do so either through vocational training programs, educational courses or direct job placement.

Participant Selection

Participants are selected by the Careers for Homemakers counselors on each campus: Forest Park, Florissant Valley and Meramec, according to academic or economic disadvantaged eligibility. They are referred to the project by faculty, outside agencies, staff, other displaced homemakers programs, the Admissions office and through Media - radio, television and newspaper public service announcements.

The vocational commitment of the participant is determined by the declaration of intent by the participant and the existing needs as determined in the initial assessment by the vocational counselor. Participants work out a "Client Employability Development Plan" with the counselor in determining goals and the activities necessary to reach goals. This plan is clarified and signed by both the client and counselor.

Career Interest Testing

For those participants who have not determined or are unsure of a career to pursue, career interest inventories and aptitude testing is administered including the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory.

Since August 1981, 169 participants have been administered the Strong-Campbell. In addition, 2,633 individual counseling sessions have been provided participants.

Job Readiness Skills Workshop

Monthly workshops of three-day duration or fifteen (15) hours are offered

on all three campuses. A team of two to three counselors from the Careers for Homemakers Program lecture and facilitate these workshops. Guest speakers are also included in the workshops. These speakers represent career programs currently being offered by the college, and representatives from employment offices, state and private.

Since July 1981, the following number of clients have participated in individual workshops:

	Forest Park	Flo.Valley	Meramec	Total
Assertive Training	165	86	178	429
Confidence Building	215	97	179	491
Resume Preparation	201	82	177	460
Job Interview Skills	188	81	159	428
Stress Management	173	95	176	444
Pre-Employment Exercises	173	74	155	402

Job Bank

An up-to-date Job Bank is maintained by the Careers for Homemakers program. Initially, approximately fifty (50) businesses were contacted by the job placement counselor. Several of these business personnel are serving as advisory members on the Advisory Committee. A brochure was developed exclusively for potential employees interested in participants and their skills acquired as homemakers. Approximately 20 to 25 personal contacts are made on a monthly basis. The Job Bank is continually up-dated to keep pace with the changing job market.

In addition to Careers for Homemakers Job Bank, the college job placement center is utilized along with the state and private employment centers. Since August 1981, three-hundred two (302) participants have used the Careers for Homemakers Job Bank, while 178 were referred to college placement center and 294 to Missouri State Employment Service.

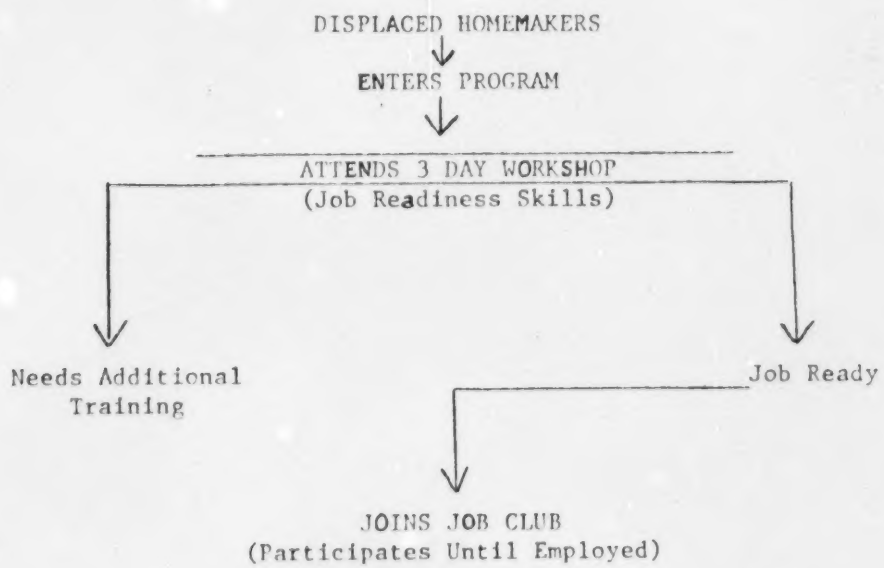
Referrals to College Facilities

The program also provides assistance in classroom and/or job training programs. Since August 1981, two-hundred fifty (250) participants have been counseled in career planning and placement. Two-hundred seven (207) participants have enrolled in programs on the three campuses. In addition, two-hundred,forty five (245) participants have been referred to financial aid and one-hundred twenty (120) have been referred for Adult Basic Education Classes.

Careers for Homemakers also maintains an up-to-date listing of supportive agencies such as legal services, housing, child care, and family services within the community.

Job Club

In an effort to further assist those participants who need additional support and counseling in securing a job, a new service has been added to the Careers for Homemakers program. This service called "Monday Morning Job Club" is available to all participants who have completed the three-day Job Readiness Skills Workshop and who are considered job ready.



Participants will meet at the Forest Park campus every Monday morning from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. They will continue to attend every Monday morning until they secure employment. The purpose of this service is:

1. To act as a support group, information center, assist in resume preparation, filling out job applications and answering help-wanted ads.
2. Use of materials from Missouri Employment Service, ads from Sunday newspapers and telephone directories.
3. Guest speakers from Missouri Employment Service, private employment services and businesses.
4. Job referrals from the Careers for Homemakers Job Bank, Missouri Employment Service and private agencies.

The Client's Active Participation will include:

1. Developing a resume, writing cover letters, answering ads, and filling out applications.
2. Making phone calls regarding job leads.
3. Setting up interviews.
4. Share with group experiences of the previous week regarding job search. Re: time spent looking, number of interviews, impressions of interviews (negative/positive), feelings relative to job search.

Counselor's Input Includes:

1. Assistance in writing resumes, cover letters, and filling out job applications.
2. To provide guest speakers.
3. Job referrals and information.
4. To act as the group facilitator.
5. To provide support and encouragement to all participants.

Support Group

Many participants who have completed the three-day workshops in Job Readiness Skills have stated how much confidence they have gained, and how much information they have acquired about the world of work by attending the workshops. Their participation gave them encouragement and support in re-entering the world of work. It has been determined that for many, the confidence and support they received during the fifteen hours of workshops will diminish unless reinforced. Careers for Homemakers has therefore begun a bi-monthly support group. This group will meet on the Meramec campus from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM two evenings per month. All participants who have completed the three-day workshop on any of the three campuses are eligible. This support group will be facilitated by the Careers for Homemakers counselor on the Meramec campus. Initially, plans include participants to set realistic goals, to share with the group both negative and positive feelings dealing with becoming emotionally and financially independent. Films will, on occasion, be shown to the group, such as Responsible Assertion. The group will be ever-changing, with some members dropping out, new members joining, while others will come when their needs dictate. This support group will act as a reinforcement and assistance in making positive readjustment into the world of work.

Weekly Assertive Training Class

Based on observations and interacting with displaced homemakers through assertive workshops, it appears that many of the participants are unable to pursue careers and resolve interpersonal conflicts due to an inability to take firm stands and express their true feelings (lack of assertive behavior). These individual's poor self-concept, lack of motivation and anxiousness produce "psychological road blocks" preventing productivity. The primary objectives of this assertive group will be:

1. Introduce Relaxation Techniques to decrease anxiety.
2. Introduce positive coping skills.
3. Introduce ego-boasting skills to aid in producing positive self-concept.
4. Introduce guidelines to assertive behavior.

The group will consist of 6-8 participants in addition to a facilitator. The group will meet weekly, each session lasting for an hour. The duration of the group will be six sessions. At the end of the sessions an evaluation will be submitted to the group by the facilitator to assess this treatment modality.

Employment

Displaced homemakers often "fall between the cracks" of the country's system of financial support. Homemakers receive no unemployment benefits or pensions. They are too young for social security, and often their children are too old to allow them to receive Aid to Dependent Children. They don't exactly fit into vocational training or educational systems either. Many just miss qualifying financially for CETA job training programs, yet cannot afford other training. Displaced homemakers have particular "identity" problems and counseling and job placement needs which are not served by many adult counseling programs.(2)

Yet, women over 40 are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. labor force today. Fifty-three percent (53%) of women age 40 to 64 are either in the work force or looking for employment. But for most older women, the obstacles to obtaining satisfactory employment, and in many cases any job at all, are enormous. Displaced homemakers, recently divorced or widowed and without a husband's paycheck or pension to support them, must support themselves, but are rejected for no recent job experience."

Eighty percent of all women work in sex-segregated, low paying, low benefits, low status jobs (clerical workers, service workers, sales persons). The percentage of older women in such traditional female employment is higher still, especially for minority women. The older woman returning to the job market from the role of homemaker has the additional obstacle of lack of recognition by employers of the skills gained from homemaking. With few exceptions, non-paid work is not considered work at all.

While age discrimination is illegal, it is rampant, combining with sex-discrimination to present double barriers for older women, and in the case of minority and handicapped women, triple barriers to job training and employment. Even aging programs discriminate against older persons, except in volunteer or the lowest paid positions.(3)

In the long run, only a national full employment program will ensure jobs for all. Meanwhile, we need a fair share of training programs and services designed specifically for older women. Recommendations include:

1. Build upon adequately funded displaced homemakers programs.

2. Multiple funding sources should be sought so that dependency on one economic sector is avoided.

3. Program outreach should become more extensive and innovative, particularly in rural areas. Admissions policies should ensure that minorities and low-income participants are sought and included in programs.

4. Centers need more extensive community linkages with agencies/businesses that provide advisory training, and job placement opportunities for displaced homemakers. Linkage involves consulting and cooperating with specialists as well as coordinating activities and using information networks.

5. More "learn and earn" job opportunities and skills training in local labor market areas need to be created. Emphasis should be on further training or experience rather than on immediate job placement at low-pay levels for displaced homemakers. Follow-up should be done on program dropouts to find out why they

left, and on graduates to determine the long-term effects of program experiences.

6. Lobbying efforts by groups should be encouraged to promote legislation favorable to displaced homemaker programs. (4)

*RESOURCES

1. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1979

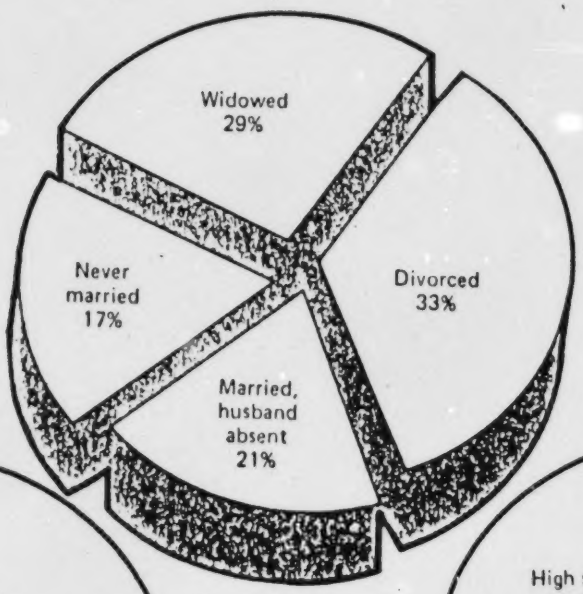
2.&4. Counseling and Personnel Services Clearinghouse-Winter 1982

3. Report of the Mini-Conference on Older Women

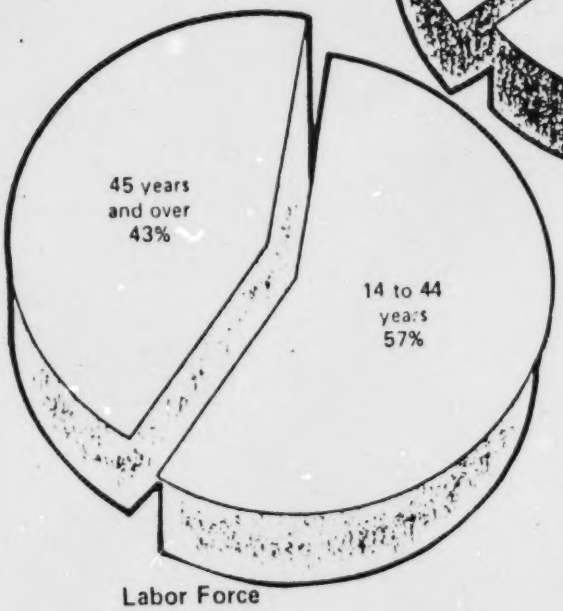
A Profile of the 8.5 Million Families Maintained by Female Householders in 1979

ENCLOSURE #1

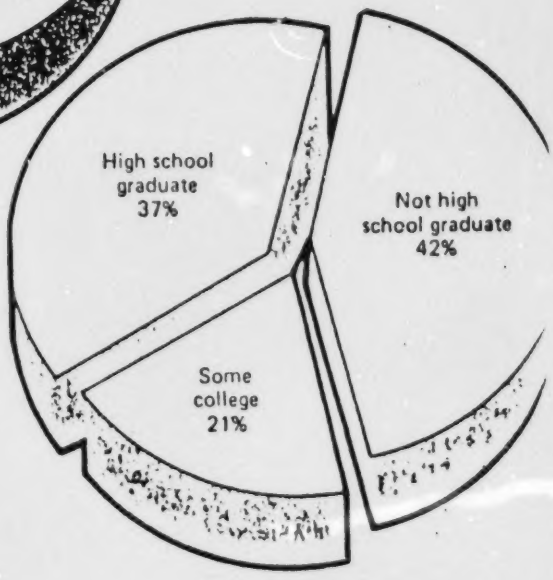
Marital Status



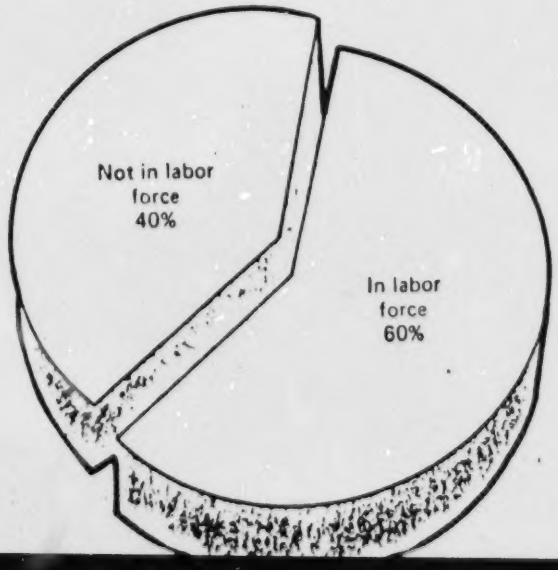
Age



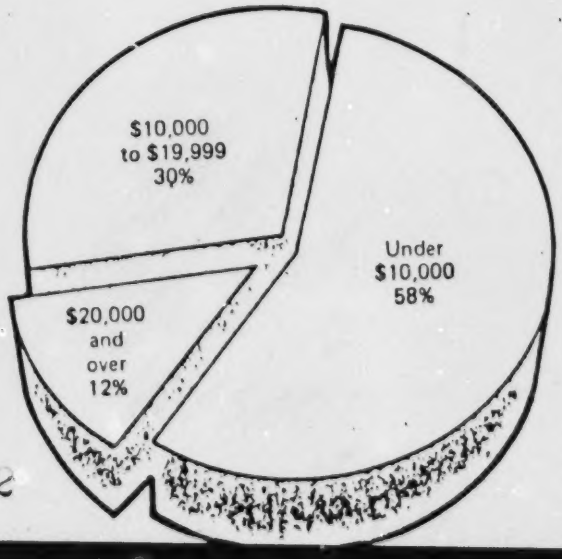
Education



Labor Force Participation



Income



CLIENT EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Vocational/Educational Areas Applicant is Interested in Pursuing and Reasons:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Short Range Goals: _____

_____

3. Long Range Goals: _____

_____

4. Are Long Range Goals Realistic: _____

_____

5. Barriers To Employment Are:

   (1) GED

   (2) Training

   (3) Work Experience

   (4) Handicap

   (5) Transportation

   (6) Other

6. Recommended Services:

   (1) Workshops

   (2) Career Exploration

   (3) Counseling

   (4) Job Search

ACTIVITY	STATE DATE	COMPLETION DATE	EXPECTED RESULTS

EDP Review (1)_____ (2)_____ (3)_____

Expected Date of Job Readiness_____

The above EDP has been developed with me. I am in agreement with it and will make the necessary effort to carry it out. I understand that this document was designed in order to clarify with me the steps which I must make in order to have more marketable job skills.

Client_____

Counselor_____

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